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Background Paper No. 14

PRODUCTION OF CURRENT INTELLIGENCE

The Office of Current Intelligence is in effect the bulletin news service of the Agency. It analyzes, evaluates, and disseminates on a "crash" basis all-source intelligence and information of interest and value to the policy-making level of the Federal Government and to the Central Intelligence Bulletin, OCI as the agent of the Director produces current intelligence in daily consultation with USIB representatives. In other publications and spot memoranda, OCI coordinates and consults with other components of CIA, and with other members of the intelligence community, to the degree permitted by the overriding need for currency.

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The "input" for OCI's production process is all-source, ranging from the most highly-classified reports of all agencies in the intelligence community to the daily press and radio, and approximates one million reports a year. It reaches us by a variety of channels. Material from FI, [REDACTED] and from the wire services comes in expeditiously by teleprinter.

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The ideal for our purposes, I suppose, would be one giant decoding and dissemination center serving the entire intelligence community which would furnish OCI by teleprinter, simultaneous with delivery to the originating agency, with all information reports reaching any member of the community and let us arrange clearance for publication where necessary once we've decided to make use of that particular report.

The Central Intelligence Bulletin: Six days a week at about 1130 OCI prepares a series of briefs on the critical intelligence situations of the day. These briefs are disseminated by secure round-robin teleprinter, and by courier for offices concerned which are not yet on the round-robin, to the offices in other agencies of the intelligence community delegated to form the USIB panel for the CIB. The briefs are studied in each agency by the area desk concerned, and a certain amount of consultation and revision may be carried out by telephone and teleprinter, to the degree that security permits, even before the

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panel meets. The panel assembles in the office of the AD/CI, under his chairmanship, each day at 1530, to reach agreement if possible on the substance of the briefs.

As of approximately 1700 daily, then, the Daily Brief of the CIB is completed. Our primary responsibility, however, is still currency, and accordingly we intend the CIB which a policy maker has available at the opening of business to reflect the situation, not as of 1700 the previous day, but the situation at 0500 or 0600 that morning--leaving little more than the interval needed for printing, collation, and dissemination. As a matter of fact, the first copies of the bulletin leave by courier as early as 0500, for the use of Pentagon briefing officers, and only last week we inserted a late item between 0500 and 0600 which was collated in most copies of the CIB but had to be disseminated by special courier to those who had already received their copies by the 0500 courier run.

To meet this requirement, briefs which are changed or added to the CIB after the panel meeting breaks up are marked with an asterisk, to indicate that they are the product, not of the CIB panel, but of CIA alone. In addition, each brief as required may be accompanied by a back-up, a lengthier article giving additional details, background information, and corroborative intelligence which is produced by OCI and not submitted for panel consideration.

In addition to scheduled daily, weekly, and monthly publications, Current Intelligence Memoranda are issued by OCI on a spot basis when the deadline of a regular publication is too far off or when greater flexibility in format, timing, content, or dissemination may be desired. OCI, through its Secretariat and the CIA's 24-hour, seven-day-a-week Watch Office, also serves as an alerting mechanism for the intelligence community and the government generally, passing flash news immediately, night or day, to the interested officials by telephone to the degree that the classification of the item and the requirements of telephone security permit.

The bulk of OCI's distribution is by courier in Washington and by pouch to overseas stations, but the Central Intelligence Bulletin in whole or in part is given teleprinter dissemination during the night to a few recipients.

With reference to the interest of your committee in possible automation, OCI's responsibility for currency makes us receptive to any automation which can be suggested to speed up the production process. We could certainly use more electrical delivery on our input. We are expanding the amount of such transmission on our output, to the degree that security and volume permit. Within Washington, it has been our experience, particularly in view of certain highly sensitive classifications, that a special courier can generally beat electrical means in

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view of security requirements and the ultimate need for courier delivery from the special signal centers to the recipients. We are, however, studying the possibility of automation in parts of our production process. One machine in particular may enable us to type a CIB item, for example, only once, and make all subsequent changes, corrections, and additions automatically by eight-channel perforated tape. Best of all, the same machine promises to deliver a standard five-channel teleprinter tape of the finished version which would pay for the equipment by eliminating manual punching of the CIB for teleprinter transmission.

For most of our internal operations, however, we will probably continue to rely on human abilities. Our dissemination of the input within M and Q Buildings, for example, is still by hand from registry to analyst, but we backstop this by a Secretariat which constantly screens incoming material as fast as it arrives and alerts the analyst by telephone to hot items in case they may have been delayed in distribution or kept from the analyst's attention by a heavy in-basket or other duties. The analyst in turn, for processing the material, relies on his own knowledge, his own judgment, and his own files, backstopped by constant contact with his opposite numbers in other agencies of the intelligence community, his desk, branch, and division chiefs, and OCI's extensive use of internal panels and boards for reviewing proposed articles. Machines are already in being, of course, by means of which the analyst could dial by teleprinter the proper bay in the archives of OCR, feed in a properly coded query, and receive back, by punch card and perforated tape, all the appropriate references in OCR's files. The trouble is that while the analyst may simply want to refresh his memory on the year in which a given French cabinet minister consorted with a brunette believed to be a Russian agent, an automated request for the files on said minister might still be spewing forth tape at 120 words a minute 24 hours after the deadline for the required article had passed. The brunette and her vintage, for OCI's purposes, will have to come from the analyst's own files or from the memories of his colleagues here at OCI.

In reply to your question about OCI's SIDO (Senior Intelligence Duty Officer) system: We have felt a growing need, particularly since the inception of the CRITIC system, for immediate decisions on matters of intelligence dissemination outside of regular office hours, decisions of sufficiently serious import so that our relatively junior watch officers should not be called on to assume this responsibility. These are decisions which cannot wait for the AD/CI or another senior official to be called into the office in the middle of the night. Accordingly we are attempting to staff the Watch Office, during off-duty hours, with a competent senior intelligence officer, with a global or generalist's approach, who can make the necessary decisions.

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